



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Office of the Chancellor

Fall 2010

Dear DCPS Educators,

When I first began to meet with our teachers three years ago, one thing I heard most often was that the system had never been very clear about what we expected from them, and what we believed good teaching looked like. The central office was sending teachers one message, the principal or instructional coach sometimes sending another, and the teacher was left in the middle without much support or consistent feedback. Schools were losing some great teachers because of this frustrating lack of clarity, and we resolved to work with teachers to provide it. Seeking input through focus groups and listening sessions with teachers, we created a Teaching and Learning Framework that outlines the practices most connected to student learning.

As we were developing this together, you have been driving unprecedented gains in student achievement in your classrooms. As you know, on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), our fourth graders *led the nation* in reading growth and outperformed *all other urban school systems* in math growth. Our graduation rate is rising, and more parents are choosing DCPS every year.

Of course, we still have a long way to go before our students will be as competitive for college and life as their suburban peers are, and I know there is still more we can do centrally to support you in meeting this challenge. I have heard from many of you about your experience with the Framework, from your relief and appreciation for clarity, to the changes you'd still like to see. Defining and assessing good teaching has never been easy, and any framework for this dynamic profession will be a work in progress.

With your feedback in mind we have made some changes to the Framework this year. Through emails, phone calls and conversations, as well as more than 50 formal feedback sessions attended by more than 500 teachers, and meetings with more than 100 principals and assistant principals, you have helped us to make the Framework more flexible, and better able to capture the complexities of teaching. The Framework also provides clearer expectations for instructional design and delivery, more definitively guides professional development, and aligns more closely with the IMPACT evaluation system. In some areas you'll also see that we've eliminated items that teachers found frustrating, such as deletions in "dynamic presence" from Teach 2, and "refers back to the objective" from Teach 1.

Thank you in advance for bringing all of your skills to bear on educating the children in your classrooms this year. It is my hope that the revised Framework will challenge and support you to reach the level of achievement that you are striving for. Best wishes to all of you for a fulfilling school year full of milestones and learning.

Sincerely,

Michelle Rhee

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